

25X1

Approved For Release 2005/08/22 : CIA-RDP85T00875R001100100081-6

Approved For Release 2005/08/22 : CIA-RDP85T00875R001100100081-6

SECRET

90

65

OCI No. 1756/71

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
Directorate of Intelligence
13 May 1971

INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

Preliminary Comment on Developments in Cairo

(As of 1630 EST)

1. President Sadat, perhaps impressed with his success in eliminating one major rival for power in Egypt, has disposed of another, and may be making a general change in the cabinet installed after Nasir's death.

2. After warming up last week with the dismissal of Vice President Ali Sabri--a perennial troublemaker who had overstepped the bounds of collegial criticism--Sadat today "accepted" the resignation of Interior Minister Sharawi Goma, one of the three or four most powerful members of the inner circle of Nasir's heirs. Other cabinet resignations are reported to be in the offing.

3. Sadat replaced Goma with Mamduh Salim, an administrator with security service experience who was considered one of Nasir's close personal friends. Rumors current in Cairo had suggested that Sadat would replace Goma with someone more personally loyal to him, and Salim may fit this bill.

4. Goma, whose control of the security apparatus made him one of the three or four most powerful men in the regime, was known to covet higher office. It was generally thought, however, that he was content to wait until a later time, and he has appeared to support Sadat's policies.

SECRET

SECRET

5. Removing Goma would considerably strengthen Sadat's personal control, but it is a sizable undertaking, nevertheless. Following the announcement, Cairo Radio interrupted normal broadcasting and switched to martial music and selected quotes from ex-President Nasir, a clear indication that the possibility of trouble was anticipated. It would appear, however, that Sadat would not have moved unless he were extremely confident of backing from the country's military leaders, whom he has been assiduously cultivating since assuming the presidency.

6. In moving to establish undisputed personal control, Sadat will want the unquestioned support of the armed forces. The day before the latest dismissal was announced, he addressed a large gathering of frontline military commanders to defend his policies. As in other recent appearances of this type, Sadat reportedly received a general ovation from his uniformed audience.

7. The President's latest display of personal authority is so unusual as to suggest that he has either acquired a towering sense of confidence or that he felt threatened by a more ominous challenge than that posed by Ali Sabri and his leftist supporters. The dismissal of Sabri had already generated rumors of further changes, many of them contradictory.

8. None of the rumors explain, however, why the President, who has yet to exercise unquestioned leadership in the Nasir style, should believe he now has the strength to move against these powerful ministers. Moreover, although Sadat has attracted wide support for his efforts to achieve a peaceful settlement with Israel, he will eventually become vulnerable to strong and potentially dangerous criticism if he cannot demonstrate tangible progress in the negotiations.

SECRET

SECRET

Late Item

Cairo Radio has also announced the resignations of Minister for Presidential Affairs Sharaf, Minister of Defense Fawzi, Minister of Information Faig, Secretary General of the ASU Nur, and ASU Executive Committee members Daud, Shugayr, and others.

SECRET